

Gov. Jindal Appoints Rodney Alexander as Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs

MONROE – Today, Governor Bobby Jindal appointed Congressman Rodney Alexander to serve as Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs (LDVA). Congressman Alexander has agreed to step down from his position in Congress and serve as Secretary of the department. He will succeed Interim Secretary David LaCerte, who will serve as Alexander's Deputy Secretary. Congressman Alexander's resignation will be effective on September 26 and he will take over as Secretary on September 30.

Governor Jindal said, "David did tremendous work for our veterans while serving as Interim Secretary, and he will continue to do a great job in his role as Deputy Secretary. Rodney has been a warrior for the people of Louisiana throughout his time in Congress. He's dedicated his life to public service. Most importantly, when Rodney went to Washington, he didn't let Washington change him, and he never forgot where he is from.

"Rodney has a servant's heart and he is always looking for ways to help people. One of the things I admire most about Rodney is his service in the Air Force. We have talked to Rodney about how he could continue to serve the people of Louisiana, and I asked Rodney if he would be willing to step in and serve as Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs. Rodney has graciously agreed to step down from his seat in Congress in order to serve, and I know that he will do an incredible job as Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

"As I've said many times before, we shouldn't have to wait until Veteran's Day or the Fourth of July to thank our heroes. Every day should be Veteran's Day, and I know that Rodney understands the needs of these courageous men and women."

Congressman Alexander said, "There is no more honorable position than serving the veterans of our great country. I am grateful that the Governor has confidence in me to do what needs to be done for these brave men and women. I look forward to working with the Governor and for veterans to make sure that their needs are protected."

Rodney Alexander Bio

Rodney Alexander is a veteran public servant. Prior to being elected to Congress, he served his country in the U.S. Air Force Reserve from 1965 to 1971. He started his career in public service at the age of 25 on the Jackson Parish Police Jury. Alexander went on to serve for 15 years as a Louisiana State Representative where he was the chairman of the House Health and Welfare

Committee. Alexander and his wife, the former Nancy Sutton, reside in Ruston, and they have three children and six grandchildren.

Veterans Affairs Accomplishment under Governor Jindal

- Governor Jindal signed legislation that allows an official “Veteran” designation on driver’s licenses for Louisiana veterans. Before the legislation, veterans had to carry cumbersome paperwork to show proof of their military service when applying for jobs or for discounts and services provided by retail stores. Now, all they need is their driver’s license.
- Governor Jindal signed legislation to ensure students who delay their TOPS award to serve in the military do not lose their eligibility for voluntarily reenlisting.
- Governor Jindal signed legislation streamlining professional licensing for military personnel and their spouses seeking employment in Louisiana, making it easier for them to find work.
- Governor Jindal signed an Executive Order that made Louisiana the third state to participate in the United States Army Partnership for Youth Success Program, encouraging employers, like the state of Louisiana, to recruit former Army active and reserve members.
- Governor Jindal redirected the Louisiana Military Family Assistance Fund to the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs. Since that time, LDVA has awarded more than \$350,000 in financial assistance to more than 2,500 Louisiana National Guardsmen and Reservists.
- Governor Jindal created the Louisiana Veterans Honor Medal, and since 2009, nearly 35,000 medals have been awarded to Louisiana veterans.
- Governor Jindal signed legislation to ensure veterans get the care they have earned by expanding the eligibility requirements of the Louisiana War Veterans Homes, allowing the state to serve a greater number of Louisiana veterans. Over 80,000 peacetime Louisiana veterans and their spouses are now eligible for service at the War Veterans Homes.
- Since 2008, the Jindal Administration has increased the presence of service offices by opening locations in every parish across the state. These parish offices provide veterans with local access to trained Veterans Assistance Counselors who help veterans and their families secure the benefits they earned through their military service.
- Governor Jindal signed legislation to help veterans access veteran-specific mental health or substance abuse services by granting judges, when sentencing veteran defendants, the authority to require that the Department of Corrections partner with the Department of Veterans Affairs to identify existing support programs.
- Governor Jindal signed legislation to crack down on individuals or entities posing as veterans or veteran owned businesses to receive special benefits or privileges afforded to veterans.
- Governor Jindal signed legislation to help protect grieving families of veterans by creating a buffer zone that prohibits the disruption or obstruction of a funeral procession, funeral or burial.
- Governor Jindal signed legislation that helps returning servicemembers, veterans and their spouses who have relocated come back to Louisiana by extending the time periods for renewing their state or professional licenses.